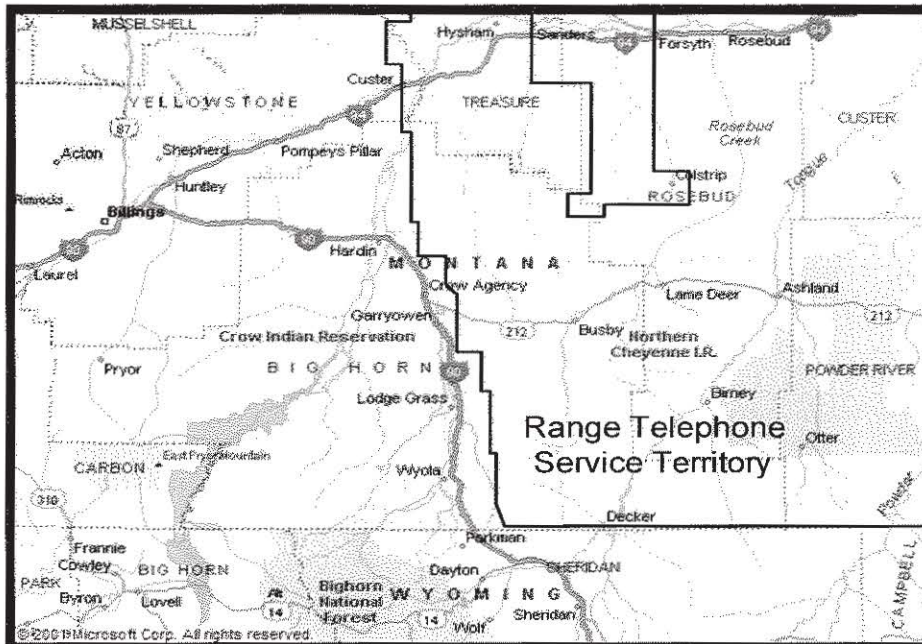


## Tribal Engagement Summary 2013

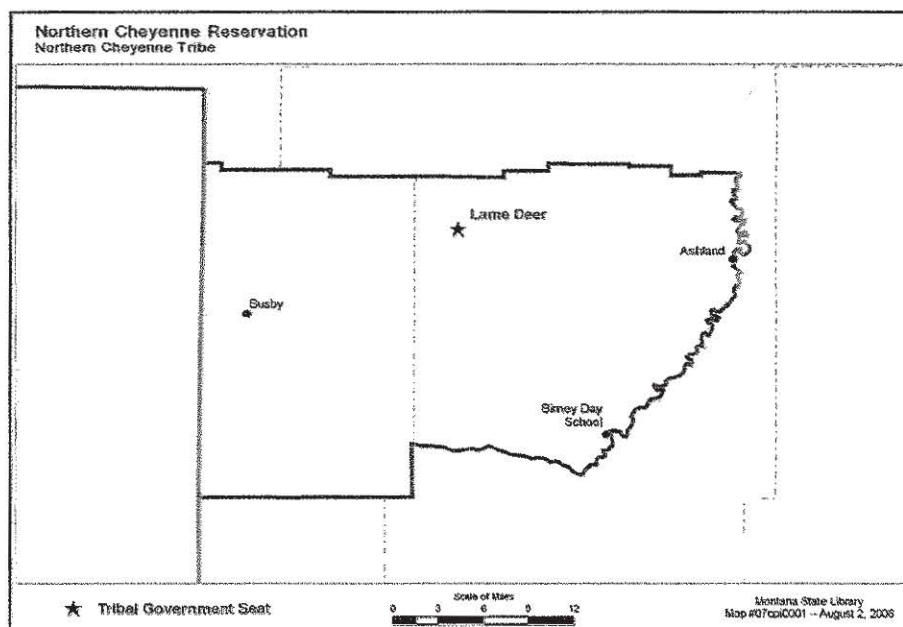
Range Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

The Northern Cheyenne and Crow Indian Reservations are located in southeastern Montana. Range Telephone Cooperative's service territory encompasses the entire Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation and a small geographic area of eastern Crow Indian Reservation (*see map below.*)



### Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation

**Location** - The Northern Cheyenne Reservation, situated in southeastern Montana, lies within the counties of Big Horn and Rosebud. The Crow Reservation borders it on the west. The reservation consists of open ponderosa-pine plateau and valley country with an annual rainfall of approximately 16 inches. The topography ranges from about 4,800 feet to a low of a little less than 3,000 feet. The reservation headquarters and the center for business activities and population are in Lama Deer. The reservation itself is divided into five districts; Busby, Lama Deer, Ashland, Birney, and Muddy (*see map below.*)



**Land Status** - The Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation is 444,000 acres in size with approximately 73% under tribal ownership, 25% under individual tribal enrollee allotment ownership and 1% under fee title or State of Montana ownership. There are approximately 7,374 enrolled members of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe with approximately 4,199 tribal members residing on the reservation.

**Housing** - The availability of housing on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation has improved in recent years because of federal housing programs similar to other tribes in Montana. To date, the Northern Cheyenne HUD program has been transformed into the Native American Housing Self-Determination Act (NAHSDA). This Act allows the Northern Cheyenne to become more self-sufficient through block grants from HUD. There are 525 mutual help homes and 299 low rent homes that have been built since the inception of federal programs on the reservation. Currently, the tribal housing authority is looking into tax credit homes and home ownership rather than continuing with mutual and low rent homes. Through NAHSDA, the Housing Authority on the Northern Cheyenne operates on an annual budget of \$3.1 million.

**Medical Facilities** - An Indian Health Service (IHS) clinic was recently built to replace the old clinic lost to fire. The new clinic opened in 1999 and is located in Lame Deer, Montana. The clinic provides medical doctors, dentists, nurses, sanitation personnel, nutritionists, Well Child personnel, and others. It has been modified and expanded to include the mental and physical needs of the reservation and non-Indian communities. The nearest Indian Health Service hospital is at Crow Agency, 45 miles west of Lame Deer, Montana. The nearest specialized facility, other than the Crow hospital is at Billings (110 miles from Lame Deer). Other medical facilities not on the reservation include places such as Colstrip, Hardin, and Forsyth.

**Education** - Elementary students are served by six schools: St. Labre Indian School and Ashland Public School, both in Ashland; Lame Deer Public High and Elementary School, Lame Deer; Northern Cheyenne Tribal School, Busby; Hardin Public School, Hardin; and Colstrip Public School, Colstrip, Montana. Both St. Labre Indian School and Ashland Public School border the eastern part of the reservation approximately 20 miles from Lame Deer. The Northern Cheyenne Tribal School is located 16 miles west of Lame Deer near the western border of the reservation in the community of Busby. Hardin Public School is approximately 55 miles west of Lame Deer. Colstrip Public School is located approximately 25 miles north of Lame Deer. All schools that serve the Northern Cheyenne Reservation have buses that run on a daily basis to and from school. Increasingly, culture and language are being emphasized at most schools that serve reservation students.

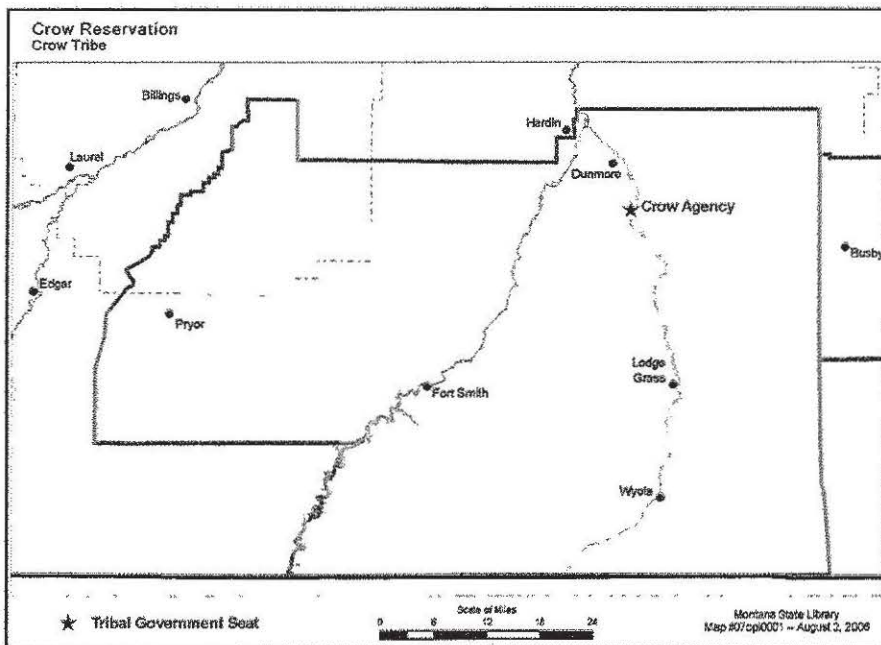
Chief Dull Knife College (CDKC) serves as the tribal community college on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. The college is named after one of two chiefs instrumental in returning the northern group back to Montana from Oklahoma. The college was originally chartered in September 1975 by Tribal Ordinance as the Northern Cheyenne Indian Action Program Incorporated (IAP). Funding was granted by the Indian Technical Assistance Center of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Today, CDKC is an open-admission, community-based, comprehensive, tribally controlled community college and land grant institution designed to provide quality educational opportunities to reservation and surrounding communities. CDKC's financial support includes Bureau of Indian Affairs' funds, grants foundations, and partnerships with other institutions.

**Employment and Income** - Major employers on the reservation include St. Labre Indian School, the federal government, tribal government, PP & L (an electrical power producing plant formerly operated by Montana Power Company) of Colstrip, Western Energy Company, and the local and surrounding public schools including CDKC. The branch of Forestry of the Bureau of Indian Affairs is another source of employment, particularly during the fire season. Unemployment fluctuates and is usually anywhere from 60 to 75 percent.



## Crow Indian Reservation

**Location** — The Crow Indian Reservation encompasses a 4,989 square mile area or 3.8 million acres mainly in Big Horn County, in south central Montana. The Crow Reservation is nearly the same size as the entire state of Connecticut. The Crow Reservation is divided into six districts for cultural and Crow governmental purposes. They are: Reno, Lodge Grass, Pryor, St. Xavier, Wyola, and Black Lodge districts (*see map below.*)



The Crow Reservation has three mountainous areas, the Big Horn Mountains and the Pryor Mountains to the south/southwest, and the Wolf Teeth Mountains to the southeast. These mountain ranges meet the plains and valleys producing varied topography. In addition to the high mountains, the reservation includes gravelly or stony slopes, broad hilltops with soils generally capable of supporting and maintaining excellent vegetative cover, level and productive irrigated valleys along the Big Horn and Little Big Horn Rivers and Pryor Creek, deep canyons, and extensive areas of rolling plateau.

The nearest service center is Hardin, Montana, immediately adjacent to the reservation's northern boundary where restaurants, shops, and motels are available. However, the biggest retail and business center for the Crow Tribe is Billings located 90 miles north of Crow Agency, Montana.

**Land Status** - The Crow Indian Reservation is 2,464,914 acres in size with approximately 18% under tribal ownership, 51% under individual tribal enrollee allotment ownership and 31% under fee title or State of Montana ownership. There are approximately 10,333 enrolled members of the Crow Tribe with approximately 7,153 tribal members residing on the reservation.

**Housing** - Housing conditions on the Crow Reservation are poor. Currently, there are 1,223 housing units across the reservation. Unfortunately, 75 percent of these housing units are considered to be substandard. Since 1971, approximately 250 HUD financed housing units have been constructed on the Crow Reservation. Another 534 cluster homes were built in 1987 in the towns of Crow Agency, Lodge Grass, Pryor, and Wyola. Overcrowding continues to be a serious problem on the reservation with two to three families living in one home. However, an estimated 2,500 new homes are needed to meet the current needs for new and replacement construction.

**Medical Facilities** - The Indian Health Service operates a new 50-bed hospital with complete inpatient care located one mile south of the Crow Agency. In addition, the outpatient facilities provide dental, vision, surgical, and special clinics once a month. Satellite outpatient services are available at the Lodge Grass and Pryor Clinics. Also, a dialysis center and a 30-patient nursing home are adjacent to the hospital. The health care facilities also serve members of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe located 30 miles east of the Crow Reservation.

**Education** - Since 1900, the Crow Tribe of Indians preferred public education for its children. Around 1920, the Crow Tribe of Indians set aside land to “pay” for the privilege of having public schools on the reservation. Currently, there are four elementary (K-8) districts and three high school (9-12) districts on or adjacent to the Crow Reservation. These school facilities are situated at Crow Agency, Lodge Grass, Ft. Smith, Wyola, Pryor, and Hardin. In addition, Crow students attend two private parochial schools, St. Xavier Mission at St. Xavier and St. Charles Mission at Pryor, Montana. The total on-reservation Indian student population is estimated at 1,500 students.

In 1980, the Crow Tribe charted Little Big Horn College which is located in Crow Agency, Montana. The college received candidacy for accreditation in 1984. The college received full accreditation in 1990 by Northwest Accreditation Commission for Schools and Colleges.

**Employment and Income** - According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs Labor report for 1999, there were 3,965 individuals in the potential labor force. Of these, 1,531 people (16 to 64 years of age) were employed, while 2,371, or 60 percent were unemployed. Unemployment reaches its peak of an estimated 85 percent during the winter months. The average annual unemployment rate on the reservation has held above 60 percent in recent years and has not dropped below 39 percent since 1976.

The economy of the Crow Reservation remains based almost entirely upon government services to the people and agriculture, farming, and ranching, although few tribal members are self-sustaining in these activities. The high winter unemployment is relieved to some extent in the spring and summer with farming, ranching, and construction work. The curtailment of the federal public service job programs in the 1980s has contributed to a sustained rise in the annual unemployment rate. Over 75 percent of the on-reservation Indian population has income below the current federally established poverty levels.

Principal employers in the existing economy are the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service, Tribal Government, coal mining operations, farming, ranching, and education related services. Income from leasing of trust lands represents the major income resource for most on-reservation tribal members.

## **2012 - 2013 Tribal Engagement Highlights**

December 13, 2012 – Letter submitted to the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council by Range Telephone Cooperative CEO explaining FCC guidelines for Tribal Engagement. Letter requested that Range Telephone be afforded the opportunity to discuss joint planning activities.

**December 17, 2012** – Email submitted to the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Secretary requesting confirmation on receipt of engagement letter and meeting request. Response from Tribal Secretary that same day that inquiry had been forwarded to the Lead Advisor to the Tribal President and to the Tribal Economic Committee Chairman.

**January 23, 2013** – Meeting with the Lame Deer School District and the schools contract E-rate consultant to conduct a needs assessment and broadband connectivity planning for the current school year.



**January 28, 2013** – Meeting with the St. Labre Catholic School in Ashland, MT and the schools contract E-rate consultant to conduct a needs assessment and broadband connectivity planning for the current school year.

**February 6, 2013** – Telephone conversation with Northern Cheyenne Tribe Secretary to schedule a needs assessment and to coordinate planning efforts.

**April 30, 2013** – Meeting at Range Telephone Headquarters with Range Telephone Cooperative board member representative of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe on best practice for engaging tribal council.

## **2012 - 2013 Tribal Engagement Highlights**

### **Feasibility and sustainability planning;**

Engineering planning and design is a continuous process as technologies for delivering broadband services evolve.

### **Marketing services in a culturally sensitive manner;**

Range Telephone advertises available services in the tribal publication known as “A Cheyenne Voice” and in regional news print available on the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Indian Reservations.

### **Compliance with Right of way processes**

The right-of-way process is coordinated with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Realty Office and the Tribal Lands Committee on all projects requiring construction on the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Indian Reservations.

### **Compliance with Land use permitting requirements**

Land use permitting requirements are assured through close interaction with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Realty Office and the Tribal Lands Committee on all projects requiring construction on the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Indian Reservations.

### **Compliance with Facilities Siting rules**

Range Telephone coordinates all facility siting with tribal authorities such as the Natural Resources Board and Cultural Commission. As a Rural Utilities Service (RUS) borrower, Range Telephone is in strict compliance with tribal and federal regulations regarding the preservation of cultural resources.

### **Compliance with Environmental Review processes;**

Range Telephone coordinates all construction activities with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Tribal authorities such as the Natural Resources Board governing environmental protection.

### **Compliance with cultural Preservation review processes;**

Range Telephone coordinates all facility siting with tribal authorities such as the Natural Resources Board and Cultural Commission. As a Rural Utilities Service (RUS) borrower, Range Telephone is in strict compliance with tribal and federal regulations regarding the preservation of cultural resources.

### **Compliance with Tribal Business and Licensing requirements;**

Range Telephone works with the Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) to assure that non-tribal member employees working on the reservation are adequately licensed to do so. Range Telephone also requires contractors providing it services to assure that their employees are properly licensed by TERO.